

# Our Public Lands

Spring 1981



BLM's Outer Continental Shelf Program





U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE  
INTERIOR

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

As the Nation's principal conservation agency, the Department of the Interior has basic responsibility for water, fish, wildlife, mineral, land, park, and recreational resources. Indian and Territorial affairs are other major concerns of America's "Department of Natural Resources."

The Department works to assure the wisest choice in managing all our resources so each will make its full contribution to a better United States—now and in the future.

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Editor: **Connie Babb**

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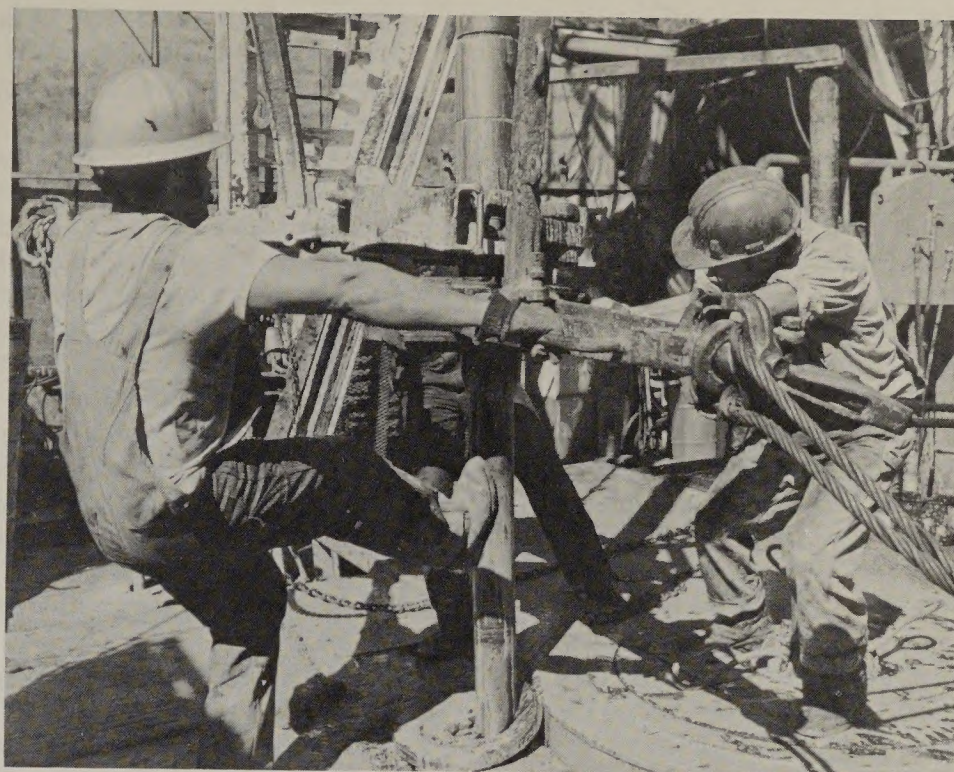
# Our Public Lands

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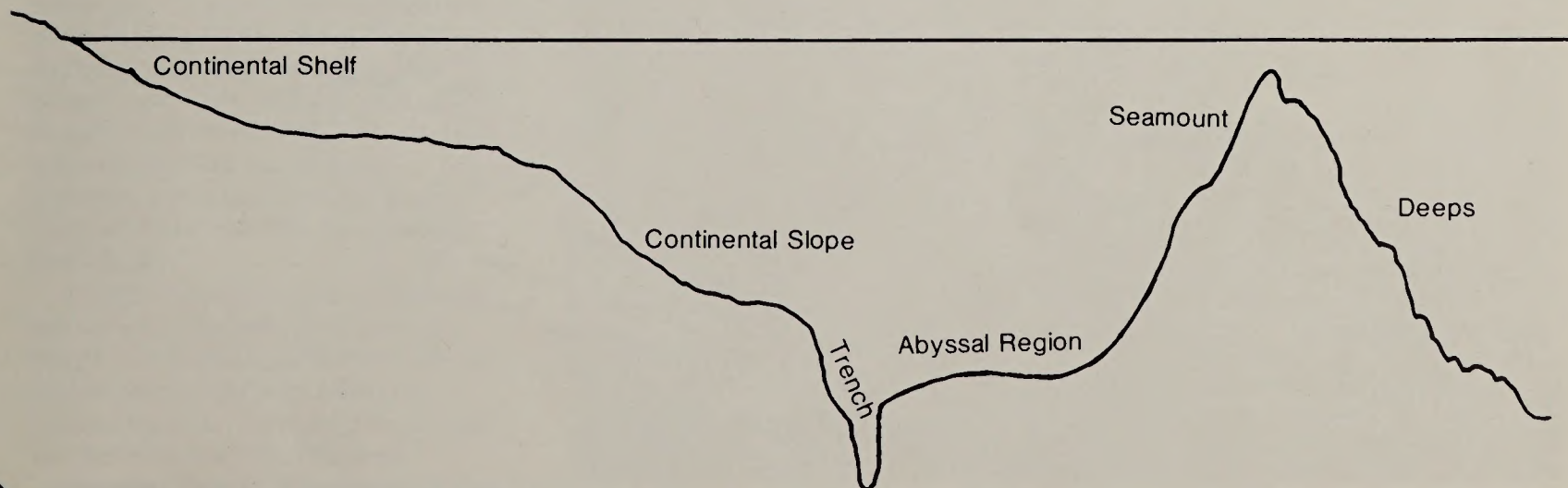


# The Vital Outer Continental Shelf

**Jim Robinson**

**A**round the coastline of the United States, where the beaches, marshes, timbered lands and rocky promontories end and the sea begins, lies a two-billion acre subsea area known as the continental shelf. This great natural heritage has yielded 5.4 billion barrels of crude petroleum and 49.2 trillion cubic feet of natural gas

to the questing drills of the petroleum industry. The U.S. Department of the Interior's Geological Survey believes the area may still hold 83 billion barrels of oil and 594 trillion cubic feet of natural gas—enough to heat all the homes in the Nation for nearly 100 years. The continental shelf is that part of the ocean floor that gently





slopes from the coastline seaward to a point where the floor abruptly drops into the ocean depths—to what geographers call the abyssal plain. This steeper slope is distinguished from the shelf and is called the continental slope. Successful wells have been drilled on both the shelf and the slope. In some areas the continental shelf extends out more than a 100 miles from shore.

The outer continental shelf is that portion of the continental shelf that lies seaward of State jurisdiction and is administered by the Federal Government. Under law, the individual coastal States were given jurisdiction over the continental shelf out to the three-mile limit. There are two exceptions on the gulf coasts of Texas and Florida where State jurisdiction extends out to the three-league limit (almost 10 miles). All beyond the State limit is considered outer continental shelf, administered for mineral leasing purposes by the Department of the Interior's Bureau of Land Management and Geological Survey.

About two percent of the 875,000

square mile area of the outer continental shelf has been leased for oil and gas exploration. This compares with about 34 percent of the outer continental shelf areas developed by other countries around the world.

Authorities believe that current production and the discovery of new sources of oil and gas resulting from exploratory drilling hold the greatest promise of meeting the Nation's immediate domestic energy needs.

Oil seeps to the surface in springs, streams and other areas. It was probably known in prehistoric times and accounts of its use appear in early historical records. The oil industry, as we know it today, developed first in North America.

By the mid 1800's the world's population of whales was in decline. Whale oil was the primary fuel for lamps, and whaling ships were forced to travel further and stay at sea longer in order to fill their ships. The immediate result was higher prices for lamp oil. Ingenious Yankees searched for a cheaper substitute and there was a dramatic increase in the demand

for crude oil. It was obvious that this demand could no longer be met by oil skimmed from natural seeps.

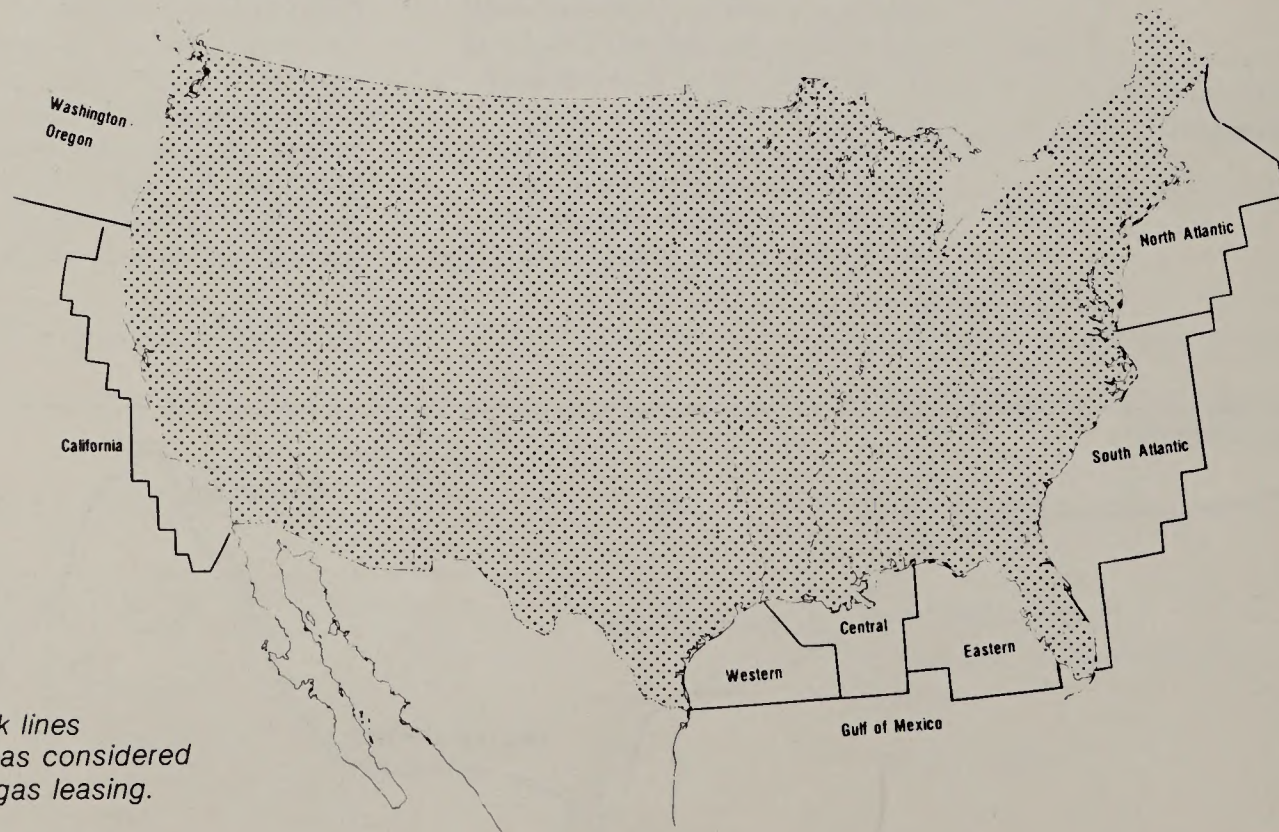
Reasoning that they could drill down to tap pools of oil just as they drilled for salt, a group of businessmen formed the Pennsylvania Rock Oil Company and hired Edwin Drake to drill for oil on the banks of Oil Creek near Titusville, Pennsylvania. While local residents jeered, Drake pushed his drill through rock, and on August 27, 1859 he found oil at a mere 69½ feet. The Nation had its first oil well.

Kerosene, distilled from crude oil, found a ready market as a cheap lamp fuel and a growing industrial complex used petroleum products for heat and lubrication. But, not until the automobile, with its internal combustion engine, did the oil industry really start to grow.

However not until the 1890's was the first well drilled in the warm, shallow waters of the Pacific Ocean off the coast of southern California.

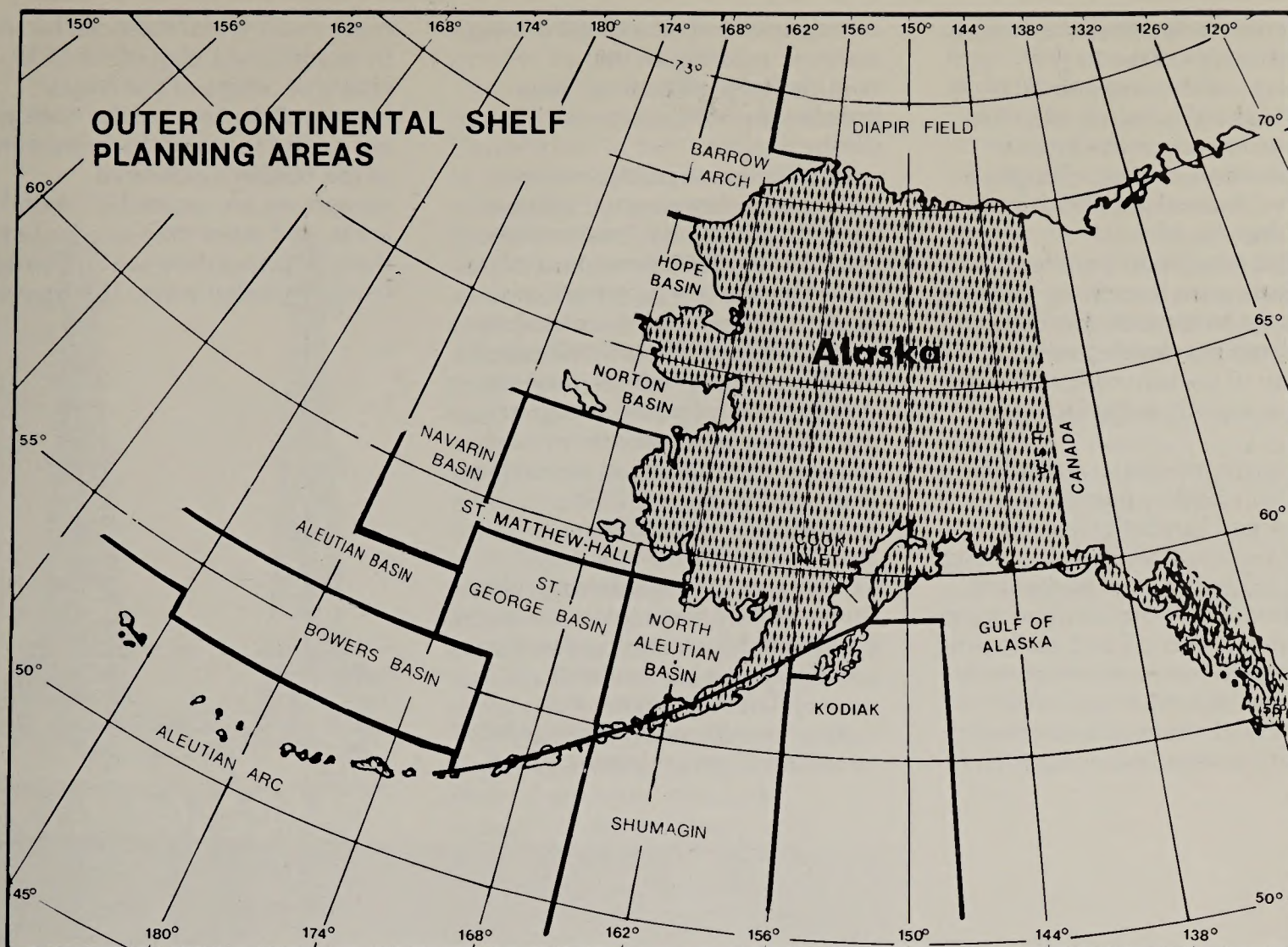
An oil company, following a string of successful onshore discoveries, moved steadily west until its drill rigs eventually came to

## OUTER CONTINENTAL SHELF PLANNING AREAS



Heavy black lines indicate areas considered for oil and gas leasing.





*Areas surrounding heavy black lines are being considered for oil and gas leasing.*

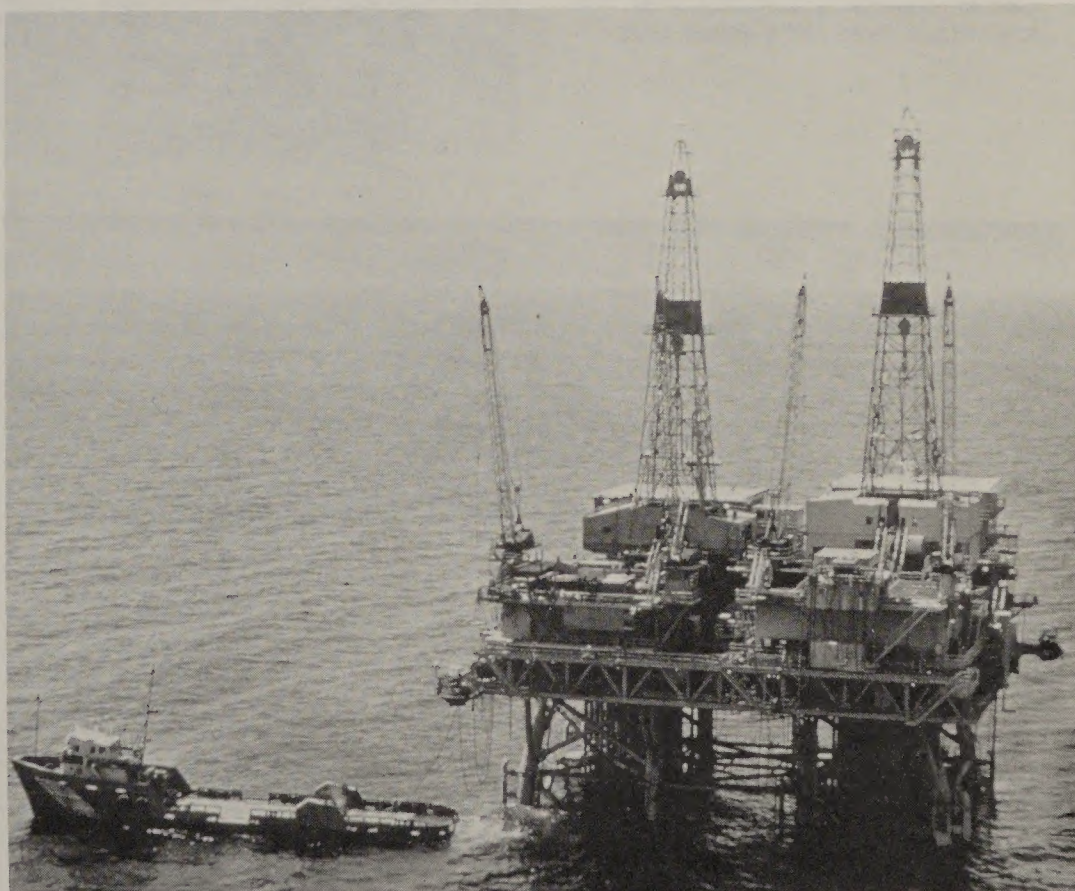
the edge of the sea. The company then built a wooden pier out over the water and drilled the first oil well on the continental shelf. The oil field that resulted became known as the Summerland Field, after a small community in the Santa Barbara-Ventura Basin.

At the time jurisdiction over territorial waters was being established in international law, no one had any inkling that the continental shelf had valuable deposits of oil, gas, or other minerals. Of immediate concern were fishing rights and national defense. Jurisdiction out to the three-mile limit—based on the range of shore-based cannons—was recognized on colonial charters and passed to the newly formed Nation at the close of the Revolution.

As successful discoveries proved the value of jurisdiction over the continental shelf, both the Federal Government and the affected States became interested in oil and gas development in the area.

President Harry Truman took the

*The Geological Survey is responsible for regulating and monitoring drilling operations and production of oil. This rig is located off the shore of Louisiana.*





first action to establish the Federal Government's claim to the resources of the continental shelf in 1946 when he issued what has become known as the Truman Proclamation. The proclamation asserted Federal jurisdiction over all offshore lands.

At the time, both Texas and Louisiana were launching vigorous programs to lease offshore tracts for oil and gas development. A number of lawsuits followed that became known as the Tideland Cases.

Congress moved to settle the dispute in 1952 by passing the Submerged Lands Act and the Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act in the following year. In the first Act Congress acknowledged State jurisdiction over oil and gas leasing on the shelf inside the three-mile limit. The second Act gave the Secretary of the Interior authority to establish regulations for the

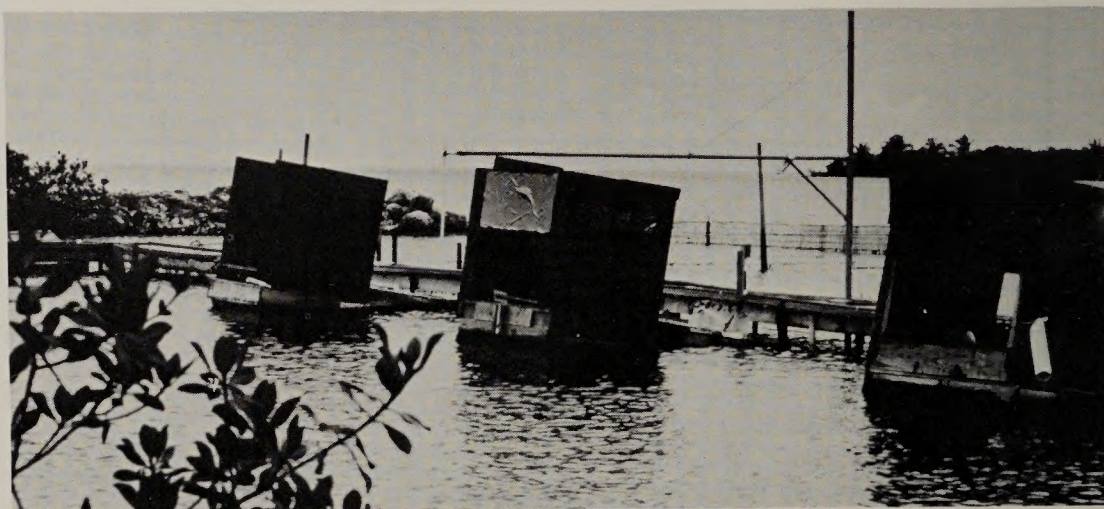
management of oil and gas leasing on those portions of the continental shelf beyond State jurisdiction—the outer continental shelf.

In response to public concern over the environment, Congress passed the National Environmental Policy Act in 1969. Provisions of this Act called for the preparation of environmental impact statements to help responsible officials reach decisions about Federal projects that might have potential impact on the human environment, and for public participation in reaching those decisions. In a 1978 amendment of the Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act, Congress mandated, among other things, public participation in outer continental shelf leasing decisions and also participation from appropriate State agencies.

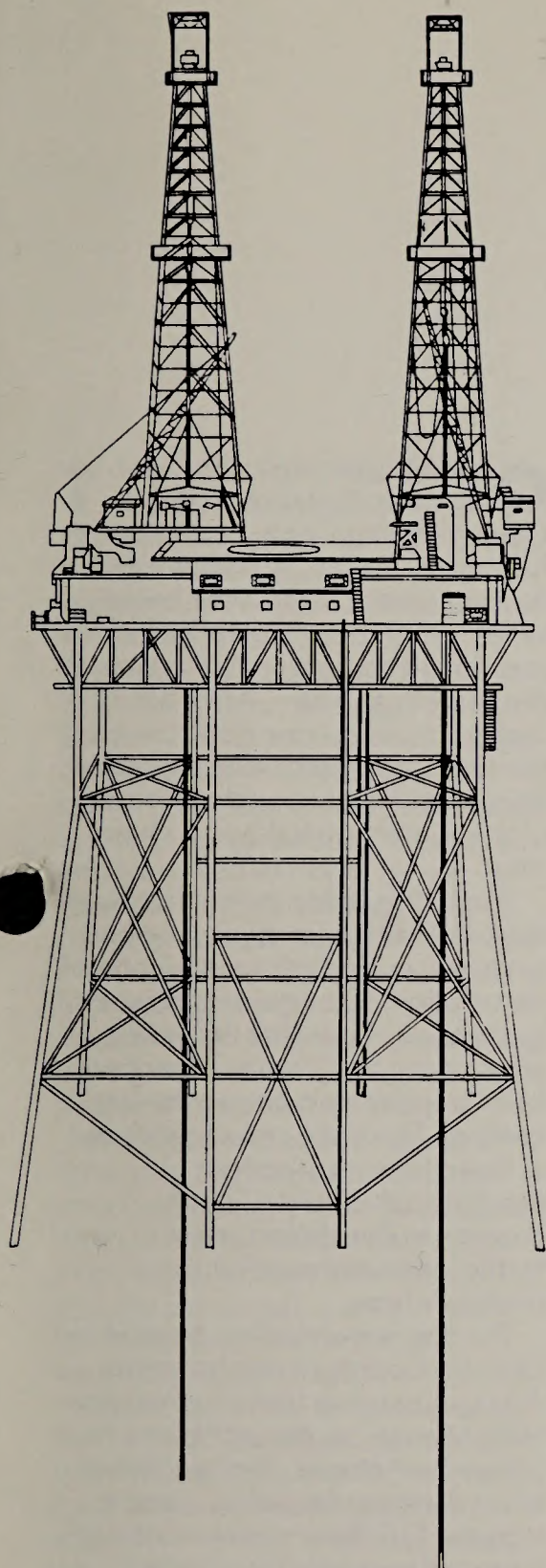
The need for public involvement in any decision pertaining to the

outer continental shelf can be seen by examining a map of the U.S. coastline. Many of the largest metropolitan areas of the Nation are on the seacoast. Forty percent of the Nation's industrial complexes are located in coastal areas, and more than one half of the U.S. population are currently living in coastal areas. This figure is

*(Right) Test dock for a BLM study to determine whether whales, porpoises and dolphins use their sonar capabilities to detect oil slicks. (Below) Dolphins are trained to respond to body motions and audio signals. Here the trainer is placing blinders over the mammal's eyes for a sonar test.*







*Rigs mounted on fixed platforms, used for development drilling after an oil or gas discovery, permit drilling on 30 or more wells from a single platform and location.*

expected to rise to almost 80 percent by the year 2000.

In order to provide time for environmental considerations, the Department of the Interior started to issue a series of five-year leasing schedules. Long range scheduling provides time for the Bureau of Land Management to gather data essential to the preparation of environmental statements. As soon as a specific area of the shelf is proposed for leasing, teams of oceanographers and other experts move in to do environmental studies. These studies may include water depths, currents, marine traffic, bottom dwelling plants and animals, other aquatic life including endangered species, water chemistry including trace elements present, the structure and stability of the ocean floor, and many other items.

The schedule also allows time for State and local agencies, other Federal agencies, affected industries, organizations, and individuals to provide input into the considerations leading to a final decision to lease, or not to lease, in this area.

The Bureau of Land Management is responsible for leasing outer continental shelf tracts for oil and gas development. After the lease has been issued, the Geological Survey is responsible for regulating and monitoring drilling operations and production.

The Bureau schedules lease sales offering specific tracts for development to the highest qualified bidder. Sales are scheduled to insure orderly and timely development of the petroleum resources of the outer continental shelf and to allow time for companies to arrange financing and equipment needed to drill and operate the lease.

Prior to each sale the Bureau follows certain pre-sale procedures, both to insure the integrity of the sale and the protection of the environment.

An effort is underway to shorten or "streamline" the pre-sale procedures to an average time of 21 months. Essentially, this involves a broadening of the analysis to encompass larger units of the OCS; simplifying internal procedures and allowing more of the process

to happen concurrently; and beginning some of the analysis earlier in the preparation process. The intent of streamlining is to accommodate an accelerated leasing effort without sacrificing essential elements of the environmental analyses. While implementing details are still being worked out to accommodate streamlining, there is no question that changes in the presale process will occur.

Interior Secretary Watt has proposed a new five year leasing schedule incorporating streamlined procedures. These changes will be finalized soon and OPL will report on the new schedule and process in a subsequent issue.

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*Jim Robinson is a Public Information Specialist in the BLM, Washington, D.C. Office.*



# Two River

*A Study in Contrasts*

## The San Simon



*The Barrier, one of three dams proposed for the San Simon, was completed last summer. It creates a stable downstream point for backfilling the main channel.*

Over 130 years ago, the Mormon Battalion, led by Colonel Phillip Cook, came upon a lush, green valley flanking a clear-flowing stream. Across the broad valley, antelope grazed marshy meadows and beavers built dams in the sparkling stream. After a long and dusty trek across desert wastes, the lush valley was a welcome sight. This was the first recorded sighting of the San Simon Valley by white men.

The fertile valley the soldiers saw back in 1847 is a far cry from what exists today. Today's scene is one of devastation. Strong words maybe, but it is very clear that the lower areas of the San Simon Valley have been transformed during the last century. The Valley now stands out as one of the most serious examples of alluvial erosion damage in the United States... a fertile land destroyed within a century's time.

The San Simon Valley, located in Graham County in southeastern Arizona, extends from the Arizona-New Mexico border northwest to Solomon, Arizona. The San Simon River draining this valley empties into the Gila River which continues eastward to empty into the San Carlos Reservoir. The Valley, about 100 miles long and 25 miles wide, includes approximately 1.5 million acres of semiarid rangeland. Elevation ranges from 3,000 to 4,000 feet. The average annual rainfall is

*Continued on page 10*



## The Sevier

Max Zupon and Perviz Chokhani

**T**here is a theory that the Sevier River in Utah was so named because of the severe conditions that existed there during the winter months. As early as 1813, Spanish explorers called the river Rio Severo, which is Spanish for severe. Antonio Armijo, of Santa Fe, was leader of an expedition to Mission de San Gabriel in 1829–30. After crossing the Rio Colorado he came upon the headwaters of Rio Severo and traversed its entire length. It was winter, the cold weather and the high altitude, together with the swift current of the stream, made him agree with the name, Rio Severo. Later Americans insisted on a proper name simulating the adjective, and named it “Sevier”.

Hearing the name for the first time, one might assume that the area is plagued by drenching rains, deep snows or searing heat. However, those familiar with the river and the surrounding area know it for its beauty, its serenity and, above all, its generosity.

The Sevier is the longest river in the United States that begins and ends in one State, and by far, the most unusual. The river gathers water from a tiny mountain creek, which is fed by tributaries in southern Utah, and travels north and west before “dumping” into the Sevier Lake. Because many uses of its water are made on its journey to the lake, the river has no water left to empty into the lake at the



*Water in the Sevier River is said to be used three or four times over between its source and its end. The Sevier Lake, into which the river empties, is now a dry lake because water seldom reaches the end of the 225-mile river.*

Continued on page 11



## The San Simon

about nine inches, the majority of which occurs during intense summer thunderstorms.

This rainfall pattern contributes to the erosion problem in the San Simon Valley. The watershed is subject to excessive soil erosion and channel development as the silty alluvium of the valley is washed away under the driving force of summer thunderstorms. Sheet erosion and rill formations are prominent on the upper levels of the watershed. Further downslope, channel development is active as illustrated by bank cutting and root exposure of the larger shrubs.

The initiation of soil erosion is believed to have been caused by a combination of three major factors. Vegetation depletion occurred due to extensive overgrazing of the valley in the 1800's and resulted in increased runoff. Droughts in the early part of this century which were followed by heavy rains compounded the problem. In addition, farming homestead laws,

requiring that so much land be worked as a criteria for ownership, caused much sod breaking even in areas unsuitable for farming. Once the sod was broken on the fragile watershed, erosion became a problem.

Although the erosion was probably initiated by these factors working collectively, other factors also contributed to the problem. Man-made features along the valley floor such as roads, embankments, railroads and canals were instrumental in determining the location of newly forming arroyos.

Concern with arroyo cutting and soil erosion has given rise to a series of conservation measures. Between 1935 and 1942 the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) attempted to stop arroyo development through the use of many small structures designed to restrict slope runoff and improve vegetation. These structures included low spreaders built of brush and loose rocks, contour furrows and small gully plugs. It is significant that these 'upslope' measures failed to control the main channel. The CCC and subsequently the Soil Conservation Service (SCS) and the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) have built at least 10 structures across the main arroyos to retard flow, capture sediment and prevent

erosion. These structures have been a little more successful. In addition, shrub control, revegetation and range management programs have been actively pursued.

Similar structures and a comprehensive land treatment program are necessary in order to complete the restoration of the Valley. Channel stabilizers at key locations on the main channel would prevent further deepening and begin to fill the channel with suspended silt moving downstream. Results would be similar to the channel filling which occurred behind the Fan and Cienega Drop Structures, the first large detention dams to be constructed on the San Simon. Soil has filled in 20 feet deep behind this dam and silted in previously eroded sidewashes since its construction in 1953. Vegetation in this restored area now benefits both cattle and wildlife for 10 miles upriver with sedimentation benefits extending some 20 miles upstream. Other detention dams placed at strategic points upstream would control flash floods and decrease soil loss. Dikes between the dams and stabilizers to distribute silt and debris and further retard flooding are also necessary. Areas needing vegetative cover need to be identified and reseeded.

BLM has begun work on this land treatment program. In October 1978, the Upper Gila-San Simon Grazing Environmental Statement was published. This statement proposed the construction of three structures for erosion control and sediment retention: The Barrier, Tanque and Slick Rock detention dams. The Barrier and Tanque are main channel structures while the Slick Rock dam will be located on a major tributary of the San Simon River. The present Fan Drop Structure, located 28 miles upstream from the Barrier site, is the third main channel structure.

Of the dams proposed, the Barrier is the key project and was completed just last summer. It will create a stable downstream point for backfilling the main channel. Without this structure, all upstream



*Dikes of brush and stone have been constructed to restrict slope runoff and improve vegetation. This one was built in the 30's by the CCC.*

*Continued on page 22*



end of its journey. Hence, the Sevier Lake is a dry lake. The river stretches 279 miles across Utah and is so narrow at its source that one can jump across. As it broadens and meanders enroute, it flows through a singularly beautiful landscape.

Mountain ranges rise in sharp contrast to the low lying valleys. The famous Big Rock Candy Mountain, north of Marysville, stands spectacular in all its colors, true to the song it inspired in the 1930's.

The Sevier River Basin is a "closed basin". A closed basin is defined as one that has within its geographical boundaries an entire river system. The most exciting thing about this basin is not its natural attributes, but the manner in which man has used it to his advantage, given its climate and its geological structure.

Existing side by side with the Tushar Mountains, with peaks rising above 12,000 feet, are many canyons that are 4,500 feet deep. Both these topographical features and subsurface strata are tilted in such a way as to feed all surface and underground water in the basin to the Sevier River Channel. Water used for irrigation seeps back to the Sevier River after plants have used a portion. This natural water recovery system allows farmers, the entire length of the river, to irrigate crops with recycled water. In fact, at least 40 percent of all irrigation in the basin is dependent on reused water.

Irrigation has been the single most important factor in the development of the area. Since modern man first began to settle and develop the area, he has resorted to flooding the area to make it suitable for agriculture.

Early settlers found that portions of the basin suffered an extreme lack of moisture and could not be settled until drainage was introduced. The town of Delta, for instance, is located in a desert converted to prosperous farming area once irrigation was made available.

Over the years, several reservoirs have been built to stabilize the use of the Sevier's water. Rains swell the river, and the water is stored in dams and reservoirs to be released during the crop-growing season. Farms nurtured by the water yield

crops of corn, oats, hay, barley, wheat, potatoes and sugar beets.

Water from the river is also used for mining purposes and for livestock watering. Mine portals dot the hillsides along the river in the Marysville area. In the mountains are high pastures that provide food for the grazing animals.

The economic importance of the Sevier Basin will be further realized when the waters are used for generating vital electricity. A large power plant has been authorized near the town of Delta. Inter-mountain Power Project has been buying irrigation rights from people around that town in preparation for building the largest power plant in the Nation.

The same waters that make possible agriculture and industrial developments also provide recreation. Kayaks, rubber rafts and motorboats cruise the river in increasing numbers in the warm summer months. Every year, thousands of climbers and backpackers take pleasure in Utah's mountains adjoining the river.

History of the area is a catalogue of slow, uncertain development. The first white men to visit the area were those in the famous Dominguez and Escalante expedition in 1776. Not much activity occurred in the basin until 1800 when Spanish trappers sought beaver and other furs. These trap-

## The Sevier

pers were among the first men to trade with Ute and Goshute Indians in the basin.

Famous mountain man Jedediah Smith passed through the basin in 1826. Smith led an expedition of 17 men from north to south, following the Sevier River part way. They then made their way west to California and eventually returned by a northern route to the Salt Lake Basin.

Mormon settlers entered the basin in 1850 but, because of hostile Indian activity, no permanent settlements were established until 1872. In 1913, in order to encourage settlement, the Piute Reservoir was built, allowing farmers for the first time to irrigate the rich soil. This reservoir was the first of five to be completed in the basin.

By the 1930's, water was beginning to become more and more valuable. In 1936, Judge LeRoy Cox issued a decree

*Continued on page 22*



*The colorful Big Rock Candy Mountain (with such sites as the Lemonade Springs) on the Sevier River was made prominent by a popular song of the 1930's.*






Fish and Wildlife Service



# The Bald Eagle

## Look But Do Not Disturb



Kris Long and Carla Alford

Spotting the birds for the first time one questions the reality—bald eagles in plain sight from the highway only a few miles from town. It seems as rare as seeing a Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep playing in your neighbor's backyard. So it's only natural that people want to see them, get close to them and take pictures of them. But the eagles are annoyed by all the fuss and attention. Now the Bureau of Land Management is acting to keep both eagle watchers and the birds happy.

Eagles migrate to Wolf Lodge Bay on Lake Coeur d'Alene in Idaho each winter, giving people a unique opportunity to view our national bird. The Wolf Lodge Bay area is about five miles northeast of the northern Idaho resort town of Coeur d'Alene. For most of the year the eagles live in solitude in the colder regions in Canada and Alaska. As winter nears, they migrate to warmer climates and congregate at wintering grounds along their migration route, such as the Wolf Lodge Bay area. From 40 to 70 eagles winter here.

Eagles are attracted by the spawned-out kokanee salmon in Lake Coeur d'Alene. Their population rises and falls with the number of dead fish available. Kokanee are small land-locked salmon with a four-year life cycle. Beginning in November of their fourth year they spawn and die,

creating an abundant food source for the eagles. The eagles usually begin arriving in mid-November and hit peak populations during the first week of January.

Bird-watching in the area has become increasingly popular over recent years and for some good reasons. BLM's Coeur d'Alene District Manager Joe Zimmer described it this way; "Here's a place where you can see our national bird in its natural habitat, close enough to observe it soaring, hunting or just perched on a snag. The area is easily accessible and contains several commercial resorts and residential developments. In addition, the eagle is a raptor, which tends to arouse more interest than other birds."

Bald eagles range nationwide during winter, but gather in large groups only in a few places such as Klamath Falls in Oregon and Glacier National Park in Montana. Wolf Lodge Bay is unique because it has uncontrolled access.

Eagles have a beauty and grace fitting to their status as our national emblem. The eagles weigh up to 14 pounds with a wingspan of six to seven feet and a body length of nearly three feet. Adult eagles are easily identified by their brilliant white head and tail feathers and brown bodies and wings. Young eagles are less spectacular, not having developed the white head and tail feathers.





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Fish and Wildlife Service



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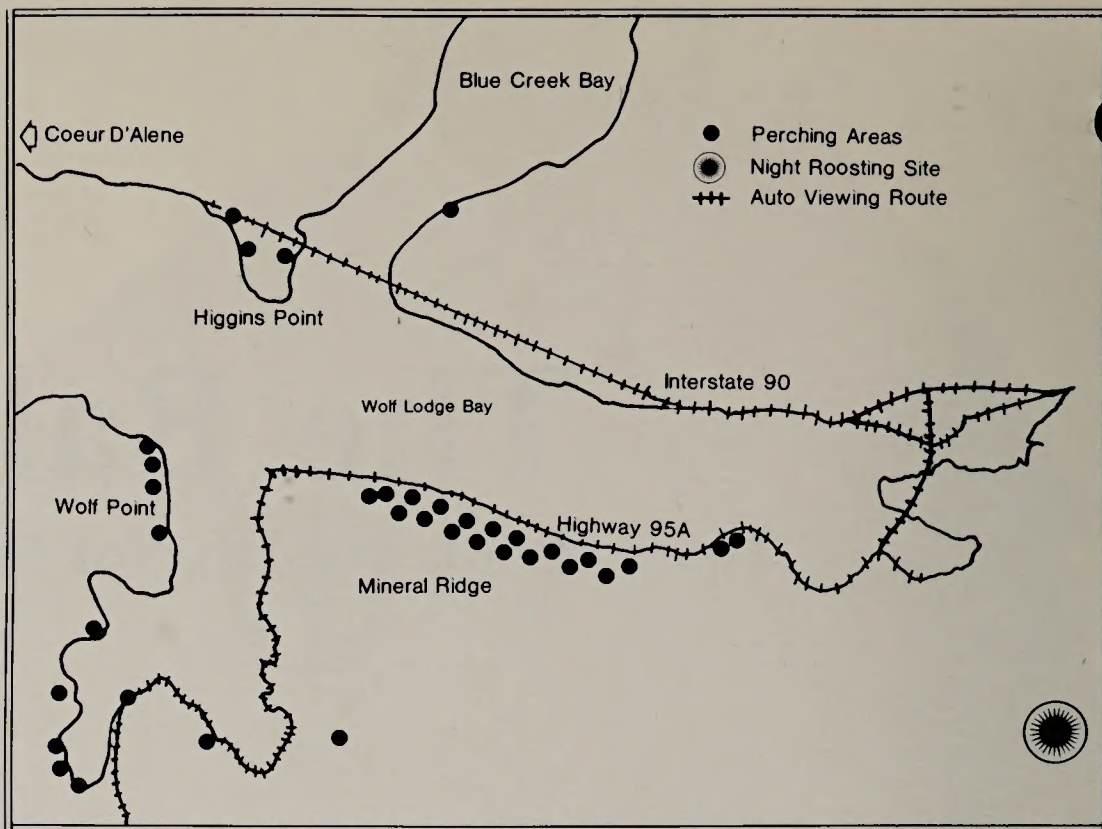


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1,2,3 The brilliant white head and tail feathers of adult eagles make them easy to spot.

4 Aerial map of the bald eagle winter habitat area on Lake Couer d'Alene  
5 Daytime perching zone for the bald eagles on Mineral Ridge. Few places exist where eagles are so highly visible and easily accessible.

6 Young eagles, less spectacular in appearance than adults, are characterized by dark heads and tail feathers.



4



5

Fish and Wildlife Service



6



At Wolf Lodge Bay there's plenty for the avid spectator to see. The birds begin their daily activities before dawn as they take wing from their night roost just south of the bay. During the early morning hours they can be seen circling the waters of Lake Coeur d'Alene in search of food. With keen eyesight, they pinpoint floating salmon and strike with amazing speed and accuracy, sinking their two-inch talons deep into the flesh of the fish. They then carry their catch to nearby perch trees to eat.

A favorite time for photographers is mid-morning. By then the eagles have begun to limit their activity and settle on perches, making easy subjects for the camera. If weather conditions are inclement or overcast with negligible air movement, the eagles are likely to spend the rest of the day perched on a branch of their favorite conifer. On sunny or windy days, they can be seen soaring high above the lake on thermal air currents and updrafts.

At dusk, the eagles leave their perches, circle over the bay several times to gain altitude, and fly eastward to their night roosts. The roosting area is located in a timbered draw south of Wolf Lodge Bay. Larger western white pine and larch trees provide the roosting sites.

Less than five years ago only a handful of local residents were even aware of the eagles' presence. Many people knew that large birds used the area but few realized they were bald eagles.

In 1975 local BLM officials initiated a campaign to let people know of this rare concentration. A popularized pamphlet was published; information spread through the media; and before long television crews started to appear, and the number of people viewing the eagles began to grow. During peak periods last winter the serenity of the quiet, snowy lakeshore was shattered by the activity of enthusiastic birders.

Most of these visitors concentrate along a short segment of highway. The highway passes through a preferred daytime perching area on the north slope of Mineral Ridge on Wolf Lodge Bay. The area is managed by BLM. Trees

within this zone are usually large, open-branched pines located at good vantage points near the shore. The eagles spend most of the day on these perch sites, highly visible to the birders.

The eagle habitat includes private, State, Forest Service and BLM land. Five years ago, BLM initiated an eagle study that focuses on the north slope of the 184-acre Mineral Ridge recreation area. The study also encompasses areas under other jurisdiction in Wolf Lodge Bay, Blue Creek Bay, Beauty Bay and surrounding shoreland areas.

As part of this study, BLM biologists have been annually monitoring the eagle populations. Observations indicate two changes have taken place. During recent years the number of people viewing the birds has increased dramatically. At the same time the eagles have gradually moved from their preferred daytime perch sites on Wolf Lodge Bay to more remote perches on Beauty Bay.

If current conditions persist, spectators will not be able to see the eagles so easily in the future. The eagles are apparently abandoning their traditional perching sites because of disturbance by visitors to the area. The eagles are accustomed to vehicles but become disturbed when people approach the perch trees.

In 1976 about 35 percent of the eagles were using Mineral Ridge while 65 percent were using the more secluded sites away from the immediate vicinity of spectators on Wolf Point. Last winter, however, only 18 percent were using Mineral Ridge while 82 percent were using Wolf Point.

Human disturbance may also be a problem at the night roost area. Last winter, biologists discovered that the roosting area is much larger than previously believed. A cross-country ski trail runs through a portion of the area now included in the roosting area. Since eagles reportedly tolerate less disturbance at roosting areas than at feeding sites, monitoring is needed to determine if the presence of skiers disturbs the birds.

Zimmer attributes part of the problem to the possibility that

"we've over-sold the area just like you can over-promote a wilderness area to the point that it becomes more popular than a developed recreation site. We need to make sure that the eagle area continues to provide enjoyable experiences for the public but take steps to avoid excessive noise and other 'people' disturbances."

It will be a difficult area to manage, because no one really knows how much disturbance it would take to permanently drive the eagles away. The movement of eagles from Mineral Ridge to Wolf Point has been very subtle and unless a person has observed it over a number of years one probably wouldn't even know it had happened.

A reassuring factor in all this is that, although the birds have moved their roosting sites, their population has stayed fairly stable over the years. District Wildlife Biologist Lew Brown believes that, because of an abundance of kokanee salmon, the eagles will withstand a lot of pressure from human disturbances. But he also admits that, while it's possible the eagles will continue to relocate their resting perches in various areas around the lake, without knowing their tolerance threshold to human disturbance, no one can be certain.

BLM is asking the public to maintain adequate distance when viewing the eagles. Viewers should stay clear of perch sites, and off the sides of the mountain. If they follow these precautions, there is a good chance the displaced eagles will return.

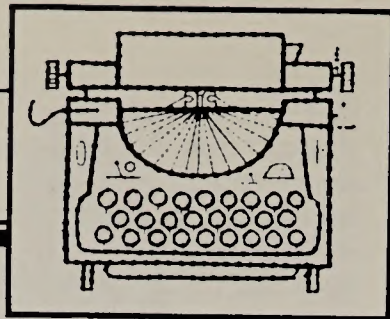
The Bureau has received cooperation and support from the local people and adjacent land owners for the bald eagle habitat protection program. At least for now, BLM is hopeful that, with a few precautionary measures, such as installing an informative sign at Mineral Ridge, the bird watchers and the eagles will be able to live in harmony.

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*Kris Long is a Public Information Specialist in BLM's Coeur d'Alene, Idaho District Office*

*Carla Alford, a wildlife biologist, is a seasonal BLM employee.*





# News Highlights

## Coal Lease Ends 10 Year Moratorium

A ten year moratorium on leasing of Federal coal was officially ended in June with the issuance of a lease for a tract in Wyoming.

The lease is the first under BLM's new long-term leasing program. The lease for the Seminole II tract was issued to Capital Development Company of Lacey, Wash., the high bidder on that tract at the competitive lease sale in January.

The tract contains approximately 7.8 million tons of recoverable coal that will be mined by surface methods.

The company will be required to pay the U.S. a royalty of 12.5 percent of the value of the coal produced and an annual rental of \$3 per acre.

Issuance of the lease to Capital Development Company is the result of a leasing process which includes close Federal-State cooperation.

## Land Withdrawals Revoked

Interior Assistant Secretary for Land and Water Resources, Garrey Carruthers signed, in May, 83 public land orders revoking withdrawal of about 680,000 acres of Federal land in 11 western States.

A withdrawal removes lands from operation of the public land laws and reserves them for Federal uses. Sometimes a withdrawal closes lands totally to all private uses. A wide range of withdrawals was affected by the 83 revocations.

If, for example, an area had been closed to mining activities, the revocation usually opens that area for mining.

"These revocations are a positive move toward accelerated multiple-use for America's wealth of public land," Carruthers said. "Our country cannot afford to ignore the assets of its public lands."

Among the signed public land

orders were parcels that included withdrawals dated as far back as 1896. Many of these long ago ceased to be used for the purposes for which they were created.

Multiple-use possibilities for the lands include mineral exploration and development, grazing, recreation, and timber harvesting.

Other withdrawal revocations will be taken on a regular basis as withdrawals are looked at to determine whether they are still needed.

## M-X Missile Program

BLM and the Air Force have signed a cooperative agreement that allows the Air Force or its agents to conduct land use studies concerning the suitability of lands in Nevada, Utah and New Mexico for possible location of M-X shelter sites.

Letters of authorization will be issued to the Air Force by BLM for activities to determine the suitability of public land areas for withdrawal, rights-of-way, material sites and other land use authorizations that may be needed with the M-X program.

The cooperative agreement will not cover any construction related activities. The letters will not transfer any administrative control, right or interest in the public lands to the Air Force, nor will the letters restrict other multiple use programs of BLM.

The Air Force plans to withdraw approximately 25 square nautical miles of public land for deployment of the M-X missile system, if it is approved as proposed.

## Forest History Society Meeting Scheduled

The Forest History Society's 35th annual meeting is scheduled for October 2-3, 1981, at the headquarters of Champion International Corp. in Stamford, Connecticut.

For information, contact the Society, 109 Coral Street, Santa Cruz, Calif. 95060, (408) 426-3770.

## Water-Data Index

The most complete compilation of information on surface and ground-water data collected at more than 100,000 sites across the U.S. is now available from the U.S. Geological Survey, Dept. of the Interior.

Based on information provided by hundreds of participating Federal, State, and local agencies across the country, the index presents a comprehensive computerized file of information about water-data acquisition activities in the U.S., its territories and possessions, as well as activities in parts of Canada and Mexico.

A basic tool for coordinating and planning water-data acquisition programs, the catalog is designed to aid investigators in determining the location, frequency, and type of measurements being made of the quantity and quality of the nation's surface- and ground-water resources.

The catalog does not contain the actual data but provides information on where and by whom data are being collected, the type or types of data acquired, and how these data can be obtained.

Copies of any of the 21 separate volumes of the "Index to the Catalog of Information on Water Data," are available free from: Office of Water Data Coordination, U.S.G.S., 417 National Center, Reston, Va. 22092.



# THE CACTUS DERBY



**John Frye**

*All photographs reprinted  
with permission from the  
Los Angeles Times*

California no-man's land that challenged the infant auto industry.

The big race was dreamed up by businessmen of the Maricopa Automobile Club of Phoenix. Endurance, rather than speed, was the objective.

In the fall of 1908, automobile races were more popular than Teddy Roosevelt, the Chicago Cubs or even Gibson Girls. Every area had its specialties: 50 and 100-mile races, hill climbs and endurance runs with purses, trophies and adulation. Automobile clubs, cities and manufacturers sponsored races on weekends and holidays. Dealers vied for top drivers to pilot their special machines. In Southern California big events were held at Santa Monica, Corona, Bakersfield and Mt. Baldy.

It may have been the California Desert's first off-road competitive event. That's not counting trooper-Indian chases and stagecoach marathons. Actually however, the 1908-14 annual "Cactus Derby", perhaps whimsically but officially, was billed as the Los Angeles to Phoenix road race.

The most infamous segments of the routings followed ancient Indian trails, long forgotten stage routes and mine-to-mine burro paths. They traversed public lands unclaimed by homesteaders, squatters, native Americans, military engineers or tract developers. From the coast into the valleys the roads were mostly paved or graded. The Arizona roads were usually decent except during rain. It was the southeastern

By October, Los Angeles sports pages headlined the greatest event ever held in the western automobile world: "Over the trackless sands of the California desert... where not even a coyote will live." They wrote of drifts, rocks, ruts and temperatures in excess of 120 over the worst road in the U.S. As the big day approached, the L.A.-Phoenix race moved on the front pages, rivaling the Taft-Bryant election coverage, with lengthy speculation and photos of the "Daring drivers who are defying death."

Automotive advertisers ran big spreads. Reo pushed its touring car as "Master of the Desert," the only car to have gone to Phoenix and returned—915 miles in only 8 days, 13 hours. The trip had been made



to mark the road.

Despite the hoopla, only four drivers signed for the grueling 418-mile run: Andy Smith driving an Elmore he called "Bull Dog;" Colonel F.C. Fenner and his White Steamer, "Black Bess;" Ralph Hamlin at the wheel of "Greyhound," a Franklin; and Harris Hanshue in "Tabasco," a Kissel-Kar.

They lined up in front of the Hollenbeck Hotel at midnight, November 8, for starts at one-hour intervals. It was like a scene from "The Great Race": spare tires, tools and auxilliary tanks for fuel and water were lashed all around. Drivers and each mechanic-guide-relief driver bottomed their dusters, lowered their goggles and swept their cap bills to the rear like Terry Thomas and Tony Curtis.

Into the night they rolled, through Pomona, San Bernardino, Palm Springs, Mecca, to the oasis of Dos Palmas, northeast of the Salton Sea. Then it was up the unused Bradshaw Trail and Brown's Wagon Road past Canyon Springs and Chuckwalls. Somewhere along there, they say, the sudden appearance of Smith's Elmore so frightened an old prospector and his burro that each took off at full speed, in opposite directions. Near Blythe Ranch, said Hamlin, "I spent the better part of a day and some of the night running over the desert looking for the Ehrenberg Ferry crossing of the Colorado." Fenner had a comfortable lead at the River and kept it through Quartzite, Salome and on into the racetrack at Phoenix and the opening of the Arizona State Fair. His elapsed running time was just under 24 hours, barely 17 MPH.

The Los Angeles Times editorialist was surprised at so much interest in four cars toiling in the sand and concluded:

The drive, over a trackless waste amid the most adverse conditions was a demonstration of the perfection to which automobile-building has been carried. But we predict that the course will never become popular as a speedway. Just wait till the promoters of injunction suits tire out and the good roads of Los Angeles county begin to take form! If that time ever comes, Phoenix as a resort for Los Angeles motor car faddists will fade.

Tub thumping started earlier in 1909. The Times said, "Never has there been so much interest in a race," and told its readers: "The course is the worst over which a race was ever held." Speculation centered on whether cities like San Bernardino might relax 12 MPH speed limits for the race.

The entrant list lengthened to 10. There were several early favorites. Fenner knew the route, and he'd switched to an Isotta, admittedly the fastest car. Roger Stearns, whose Ford was the smallest entry, and Bill Bobyshell in a Dorris had driven several practice runs. Popular favorite was Hamlin and his Franklin. However, other drivers taunted him for scientifically planning his drive to be at certain landmarks according to time. Odds fluctuated and considerable cash changed hands. Ground rules changed. After crossing the river, cars came under control for a time so they could make the dash to the grandstands at the correct hour to open the State Fair.

A cheering crowd of 50,000 saw the racers leave from the Hollenbeck, one every 15 minutes. Fenner rolled into a narrow lead before Mecca. Meanwhile Bobyshell ripped up the underpinnings on his Dorris south of Palm Springs when he hit a willow tree at 30 MPH. Hanshue detoured his Kissel east of Mecca, slid into a recently irrigated area, reversed through the mud, lost a steering knuckle and raced along the regular route to catch up. The team of Smith-Dale stripped the Elmore's low gear at Chuckwalla, slowing them out of contention. Across the river, Joe Nikrent had surprisingly gained the lead and held on despite taking a wrong turn out of Salome and losing his way for several minutes.

Nikrent turned the wheel over to young brother Louis for the finish of the race and the plaudits of the crowd. Official time was 19 hours, 13 minutes and 30 seconds. Fenner

was next in—towed for the last 10 miles after breaking down. He was later allowed second place since rules did not specify power source for the finish. Harold Stone's Columbia was third of the seven cars to complete the race.

On the night of November 5, 1910, drivers and 14 cars lined up in front of the Hollenbeck. W.D. Tremaine in a Pope-Hartford jumped off at 10:55, followed by the others at five-minute intervals. Tremaine set a new speed record to San Bernardino but then faded behind Harvey Herrick's Kissel and the popular Hamlin, whose methodical driving brought his Franklin steadily up from the thirteenth start. Improper engine adjustment almost shook the Nikrents' Knox to pieces near Chuchwalla and they dropped out along with Clarence Smith and the Knox with carburetor trouble.

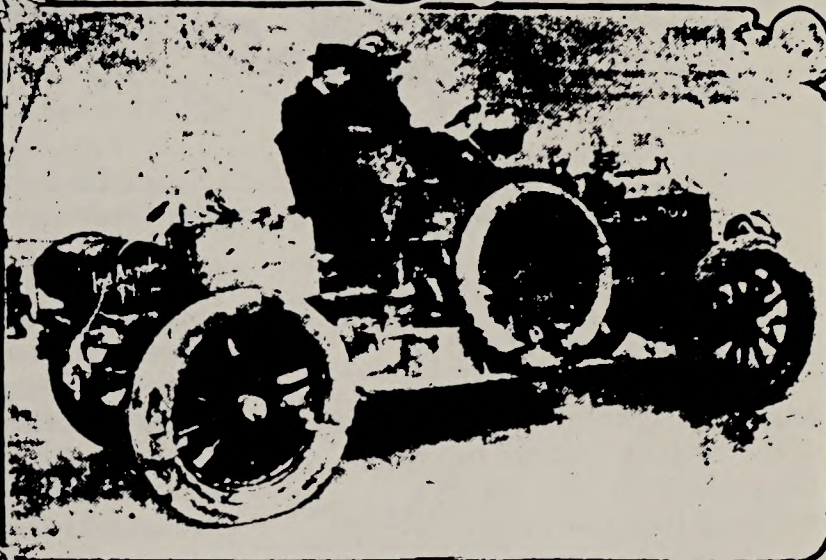
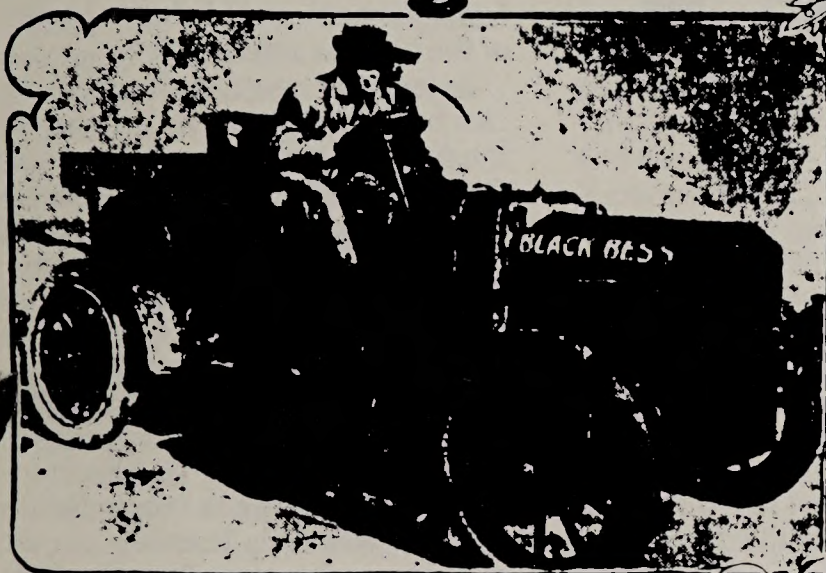
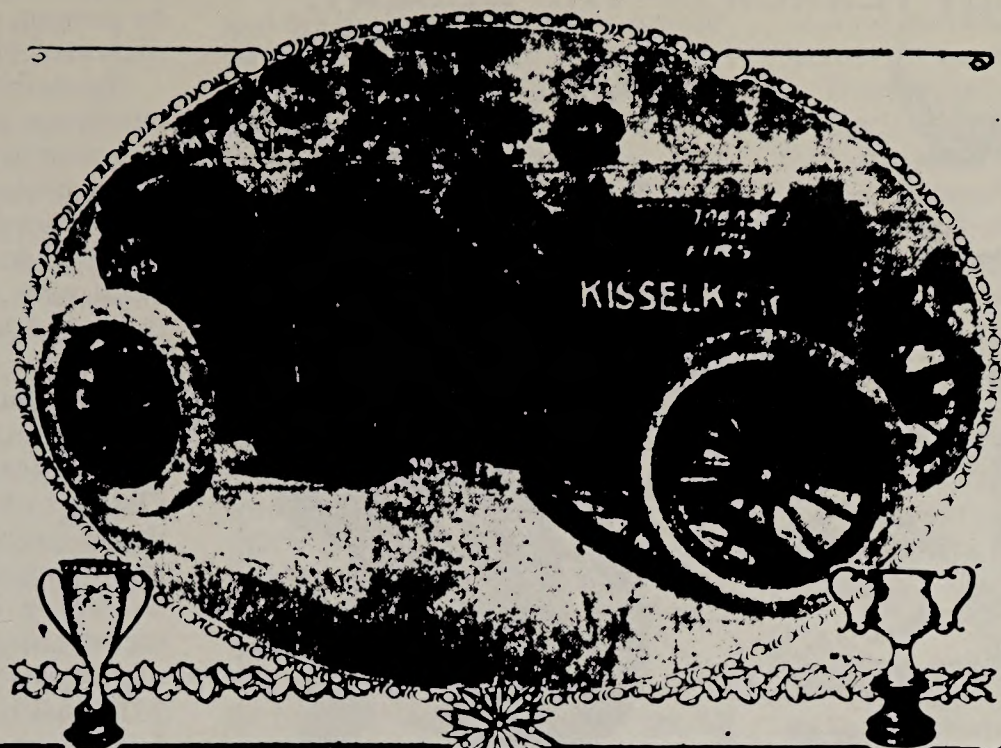
At the Colorado River Herrick took the lead after gaining time riding the Southern Pacific rails around Mecca. He continued at the front on into Phoenix, finishing a half-hour ahead of Hamlin in elapsed time and almost one hour and a half over Tremaine. The winning time went down to 15 hours and 44 minutes, and the purse was up to \$1,500 for the winner.

Said the Southern California Auto Club's Touring Topics:

Without question it was the severest speed contest ever held in the history of motoring. Beginning on boulevards, running into fair-to-good country roads, then rough roads with sharp rises; through sand which necessitated much work in the low; over rocks, through gulleys and bad washes; through brush and dangerous chuck holes, these cars pushed their way to Phoenix. In no place in the world could so difficult a course be selected. It tested every point of a car and the skill and endurance of the driver.

The next year was a whole new race track. For 1911 the promoters switched the route through San Diego and El Centro, then down into Mexicali and across that section of Baja California to re-emerge just west of the Colorado, then Yuma and across to Phoenix—542 miles. The inducement was lap

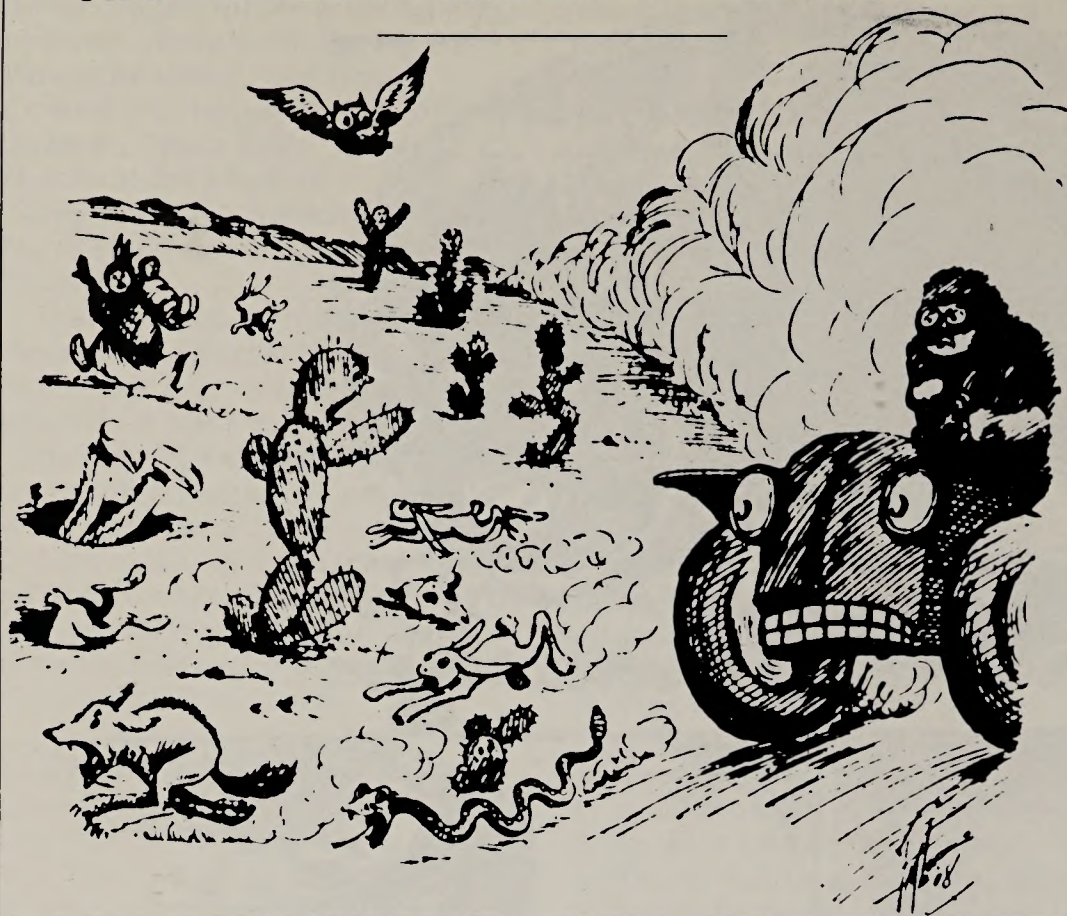




The 1908 "Cactus Derby" Contestants. Top: Harris Hanshue in his Kisselkar "Tobasco;" Center left: Col. F.C. Fenner, at the wheel of his White racer, "Black Bess;" Center right: Andy Smith, driving an Elmore he called "Bull Dog;" Bottom: Ralph Hamlin in his Franklin, "Greyhound."



## THE NEWEST TERROR OF THE DESERT.



Nov. 2, 1908 Los Angeles Times cartoon

prizes at San Diego and El Centro that sweetened the \$7,000 pot.

Sixteen starters left First and Main, Los Angeles, late November 4, for the fairly smooth run to San Diego. Herrick, this year in a National took that prize. Problems hit immediately east, coming down out of the mountains. Teddy Tetzlaff spun his Fiat out of a sharp turn into a telegraph pole, severely injuring his mechanic. Clarence Smith and his mechanic went over an embankment and were pinned under their Maxwell. Hamlin broke a spring when he rammed a culvert near Calexico and lost an hour for repairs. Herrick, who led at El Centro also, kept in front and after the night stop at Yuma had first getaway. He came into Phoenix with a total elapsed time of 20 hrs, 22 minutes, easily outdistancing Hamlin's Franklin and Tom Carrigan's Midland.

In 1912 the race route was not selected until late October. Officials earlier decided to go with the 1908-10 routing as far as Mecca and then go through the sand between Mammoth Wash and Glamis and to follow the SP tracks to Yuma. The distance was shortened to 511 miles.

Of the dozen starters, Hamlin was again the popular favorite, having stuck with a light Franklin and being the only entrant to drive in all five races. Again he drove by plan, scheduling 18 hours and 10 minutes into Phoenix. Starting ninth the night of October 26 and hitting 65 MPH through Pomona, he had passed all but two cars at Palm Springs. Mushing through the sand dunes on his large tires, Hamlin passed Al Faulkner whose heavy Simplex bogged in a drift. Rafted across the Colorado by Indians, Hamlin was under control at Yuma Sunday afternoon and night, continuing on Monday. Three flooded rivers had to be forded. Finishing at Phoenix in 18 hours and 22 minutes—12 minutes behind his schedule—Ralph Hamlin had finally achieved his

goal, plus \$5,000. Then and there he gave up racing as he had promised his wife.

The sixth annual "sand classic" combined the two previous routes. It moved down the coast to San Diego and over the mountains into the desert through Mammoth Wash down to Yuma and across—574.4 miles. Another change was the 5:30 A.M. start on Monday, November 3, 1913, from the Los Angeles eastern city limits.

Big news was the addition of the great eastern driver Barney Oldfield who entered a Simplex in the 24-car field. The cigar-chomping Oldfield was fast becoming the biggest name in auto racing history. In 1910 he had set a world one-mile speed record at 131.72 MPH. Another favorite was Frank Verbeck and his Fiat, winner of the big Sacramento race.

Before reaching San Diego, six cars had crashed out. By El Centro the field was reduced to 15. Oldfield had clocked a new Los Angeles-to-San Diego record of 2:42. By El Centro, however, Olin Smith, an unknown Locomobile driver, had the drop on Barney. He increased his lead through the dunes and at Yuma was 42 minutes ahead of Oldfield and 32 minutes up on Charley Soules' Cadillac. After the night stop at Yuma the cars got away early Tuesday morning. Half-way to Phoenix, first Oldfield then Soules crashed. Oldfield later hitch-hiked into town on a trunk rack. With his closest competitors out, Smith breezed into Phoenix with an elapsed time of 18:50, a new race record, averaging over 30 MPH.

Big changes marked the 1914 "greatest test for car and driver ever known." The route was mapped north from San Bernardino through Cajon Pass to Victorville, Barstow, whistle-stops and sidings, Needles, Kingman, Prescott and down to Phoenix. It was 670 miles, mostly on the Old National Trails "Highway,"



paralleling the Santa Fe railway.

A special train was chartered so that sponsors and aficionados could watch their heroes battle for positions along most of the roads.

Oldfield entered again along with his archrival, the equally prominent Louis Chevrolet. The two had been chasing each other around eastern tracks for several years. American Grand Prix winner Bill Taylor brought out his Alco. The infant movie industry entered a Thomas driven by H.J. Pink. The Times gave the race more space than the German fall offensive or the Mexico Revolution. The paper also sent a reporter in a Buick scout car in advance to mark the road with confetti.

Preparations were thorough. Participants trained for it, sleeping in the desert for practice. One Cadillac had 50,000 miles of desert driving; three Metzes were completely rebuilt for the climate and terrain. In contrast, Cliff Durant chose a stock Chevrolet roadster, and Oldfield planned to carry only two spare tires on his race-track Stutz, which few experts thought could complete such an endurance run. Competing for a new medal inscribed "Master Driver of the World" were 20 top drivers.

November 9 was a drizzly morning all the way to Cajon Pass. Two cars went out of control and ditched early. Oldfield, who started fifth, had promised he'd be in the lead before reaching the desert. Gaining steadily, he was two miles behind Durant coming into Devore. Then Durant had to hold up at a crossing to wait out an unscheduled freight train. With all of Barstow turned out, Durant came into town a nose ahead of Oldfield, but behind in elapsed time. Gaining on the long afternoon run across the desert and future Route 66 to Needles, Oldfield came in for the night with a good lead.

More rain along the Colorado caused accidents and lost time in Arizona. Mechanics fastened skid chains. By nightfall, Oldfield had a 48-minute-5-second lead.

On the final dash for Phoenix next morning it was Oldfields' turn for woes. Driving conservatively near Wichtenberg his carburetor

became wet and he stalled for several minutes, Nikrent's Paige and Bill Bramlette's Cadillac passed him. That same morning Louis Chevrolet and Olin Davis dropped out. Then Bramlette plowed over an embankment and lost his steering.

The roaring crowd at the fairgrounds could identify neither mud-spattered cars nor drivers as they began coming down the home stretch. Nikrent arrived first, 17 minutes in front of Bramlette, who drove in with two fence rails lashed to the axels so he could steer the last 20 miles. Finally, Oldfield splashed down to the finish line, disgusted and disgruntled. He thought he'd lost, but Nikrent came up to congratulate him. On elapsed time, he had won by 35 minutes. His total time, 23 hours, 13.5 minutes, was hardly a record but it could be blamed on rain.

In one of its summaries the Times said that the Lost Angeles to Phoenix race "...will live long after the other great races ... forgotten." Somehow, someone forgot quickly. That was the end of the great race. Why is not known for sure.

Jack Holmelund of the Automobile Club of Southern California has the most logical theories. First: the race was instituted in 1908 to sell cars by showing that they could go all the way from Los Angeles to Phoenix and survive the barren, rugged desert terrain. As autos and roads improved people took dependability for granted and the expense of the race was not worth dealer time or driver effort. Secondly: internal politics caused the local Southern California Club to withdraw from the American Automobile Association from 1915 to 1945. Drivers participating on the Coast would be competing in a nonsanctioned race.

Of course, road improvements through the years may also have detracted from the formidable

reputation of the race. For, despite the Times flippant prediction, several speedways developed across the desert.

Then there's a possibility that the desert's first ORV event finally brought forth its first environmental impact statement. In any event, sizable strips of the original Los Angeles-to-Phoenix route are still as rough and rugged as they were more than 70 years ago.

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*John Frye, a former BLM employee of the Riverside, California Office, now works for the Department of the Navy as a Public Information Specialist*

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The California Desert was once a forgotten no-man's land. Infrequent users such as the participants of the "Cactus Derby" of 1908-1914 had little or no appreciation for the fragile ecology of the desert. Recent years, however, have brought about an environmental awareness for the desert as well as an appreciation of all that this land has to offer. The area abounds in historic, scenic, archeological, biological, cultural, scientific, educational, recreational and economic resources. This awareness has resulted in conflicts from many user groups for the 25-million acre area which includes 21.1 million acres of public lands. Much of the 15 million annual visitor use days of recreation in the area come from off-highway vehicle play. In April, Interior Secretary Watt approved a comprehensive multiple-use and protection plan for the California Desert (see OPL, Fall 1980). This plan includes the addition of a key open area for off-road vehicle use, for a total of nine such areas, in addition to four major sand dunes and three major dry lakes, comprising 505,000 acres. The plan commits BLM to an annual review of the situation in the California Desert Conservation Area. This annual review will allow consideration of policy changes and accommodation of changing uses.

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## The San Simon

projects would be subject to failure and undercutting. Engineers project that in three years this structure will stabilize and fill the main channel for 14 miles upstream. The Tanque structure, together with a series of detention dams placed along major and minor tributaries, will provide similar results. The smallest of the three dams proposed is Slick Rock. This dam would be designed to store water from a 50-year flood and the channel behind it would fill with sediment to the level of outlet pipe within 25 years.

In addition to these structures, approximately 17 small detention dams—10 of which are completed—will aid in erosion control. Minor structures include dikes, check dams and diversions above and below the major structures.

While the project is massive, results will mean a restored river valley some 100 miles long, with additional benefits for downstream water users through increased water yield and reduced silt. The situation today is grim: While only three percent of the water flowing into the San Carlos Reservoir originates in the San Simon, over 29 per cent of the silt load comes from this source! These figures could eventually be reversed with completion of the restoration project. Thus, benefits would be provided for both upstream and downstream water users.

The San Simon Valley has been a lesson to us in what can happen with mismanagement of the land. This time, BLM can act to alleviate some of those problems.

## The Sevier



*Scenic mountains border the Sevier River's closed basin.*

governing water used in the basin. Under the Cox Decree, water rights in the entire basin, from headwaters to the Sevier Dry Lake, were established. The basin was divided into two distribution zones separated by the Vermilion canals. Despite the decree, water rights are still hotly contested throughout the basin.

Today, nearly all of the basin is administered by the Bureau of Land Management and the Forest Service. These two Federal agencies have played a vital role in the study and development of the basin.

Many programs have been developed for efficient utilization of water and development of salvaged water supplies. These have contributed to the expansion and

stabilization of the agricultural industry.

BLM-administered lands provide about 40 percent of the forage requirements for livestock in the basin.

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*Max Zupon is a former BLM Utah State Office Public Affairs staff member. He is now employed with Kennecott Minerals Company.*

*Perviz Chokhani, previously with the Office of Public Affairs, is a Writer-Editor with BLM's Alaska Programs staff, Washington, D.C.*



# Public Land Sales

Tracts of public land are sold by the State Offices listed on this page. Sales are held only when land use planning indicates that the public interest will be better served by disposal of the tract in question. In light of the time involved in preparing, printing, and distributing this publication, it is impossible to report on all sales far enough in advance to give most

readers an opportunity to participate. However, notices of sale will be published in the Federal Register and in local newspapers serving the community where the land being offered is located. These notices will appear at least 60 days before the sale. Currently, the only States authorized to conduct auction sales are Nevada and Wyoming.

## STATE OFFICES U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

### **ALASKA:**

701 'C' Street  
Box 13  
Anchorage, AK 99513

### **ARIZONA:**

2400 Valley Bank Center  
Phoenix, AZ 85073

### **CALIFORNIA:**

Federal Building, Room E-2841  
2800 Cottage Way  
Sacramento, CA 95825

### **COLORADO:**

Colorado State Bank Building  
1600 Broadway  
Denver, CO 80202

### **STATES EAST OF THE MISSISSIPPI RIVER, PLUS IOWA, MINNESOTA, MISSOURI, ARKANSAS AND LOUISIANA:**

Eastern States Office  
350 So. Pickett St.  
Alexandria, VA 22304

### **IDAHO:**

Federal Building, Room 398  
550 West Fort Street  
P.O. Box 042  
Boise, ID 83724

### **MONTANA, NORTH DAKOTA AND SOUTH DAKOTA**

222 N. 32nd Street  
P.O. Box 30157  
Billings, MT 59107

### **NEVADA:**

Federal Building, Room 3008  
300 Booth Street  
Reno, NV 89509

### **NEW MEXICO, OKLAHOMA AND TEXAS:**

U.S. Post Office and Federal Building  
P.O. Box 1449  
Santa Fe, NM 87501

### **OREGON AND WASHINGTON:**

729 N E Oregon Street  
P.O. Box 2965  
Portland, OR 97208

### **UTAH:**

University Club Building  
136 East South Temple  
Salt Lake City, UT 84111

### **WYOMING, KANSAS AND NEBRASKA:**

2515 Warren Ave.  
P.O. Box 1828  
Cheyenne, WY 82001





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